

Study Support Tools

There is a wide range of software tools that you can utilise to study effectively and develop the skills you need to succeed. Our top four recommended tools are on this page, with some further suggestions on the next page.

Read & Write

Read & Write is software which can help improve literacy skills. It can help English Language Learners, people with dyslexia or other learning difficulties, and can benefit all students as it makes a lot of everyday literacy tasks simpler, quicker and more accurate. It is installed on all computers on campus for ease of access.

For temporary home access to Read & Write, the video linked to below explains how to access the “Take Home” version of the software that has been provided free of charge.

Instructional Video for Accessing Read & Write: <https://youtu.be/xX-MYDagppc>

Access Code for Temporary Use: HU7WYPM2UJ

XMind 8

XMind allows you to create a picture of your ideas and concepts in the form of a diagram or mind map. It also lets you reorganise your visual plans into written documents, meaning that your map or diagram can become the structure for an essay or report. XMind stimulates both visual and linear thinking to deepen understanding of concepts, increase memory retention, develop organisational skills and tap creativity.

XMind is available for both Windows and Mac. www.xmind.net/download/xmind8

Balabolka

Balabolka is a free text-to-speech program that runs on Windows XP; Vista; 7 and 8. It can read text from a variety of file formats, including text that is copied to the clipboard. This text can also be saved in several audio formats so that you can listen to it again using a media player or mobile device.

My Study Bar

MyStudyBar is a tool which can help students overcome common problems with studying, reading and writing. The package consists of a set of portable open source and freeware applications, including Balabolka and XMind, assembled into one convenient package. MyStudyBar has six sections, each with a drop down menu offering personal choice, flexibility and independent learning, particularly for those learners who require additional strategies to support their learning.

My Study Bar is completely free to download and works with any Windows computer

<http://www.callscotland.org.uk/mvstudybar/>

More information and tutorials on using the above tools can be found in the Online Careers & Academic Skills Centre:

[Click here to log in and be redirected to the Study Tools page](#)

If accessing this document in print format you should log into the Online Careers & Academic Skills Centre by clicking on the tile in MyDay or the log in link at <https://www.uws.ac.uk/current-students/supporting-your-studies/study-skills/>. Once logged in go to the Study Skills section.

Some further suggestions

Scottish Computer Voices

Provides high quality computer voices that work with Balabolka www.thescottishvoice.org.uk/download

Speak for Word

Speak is a built-in feature of Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, and OneNote. You can use Speak to have text read aloud in the language of your version of Office.

[How to Use Speak in Word](#)

Grammarly

Provides proofreading and grammar checking support and works with a number of programmes and websites, including MS Office. Please note that the functionality is restricted in the free version. www.grammarly.com

ATbar

A free, open source, cross-browser toolbar to help users customise the way they view and interact with web pages.

www.atbar.org

My Web My Way

This BBC web page shows you how to change the way your internet pages look. www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/guides

Calendars

Use built in features of your online calendar (Outlook, Google, iCal) to set deadlines, reminders and plan a study or revision timetable

For Mac Users

Mac users can utilise many inbuilt accessibility features. Information can be found at: www.apple.com/uk/education/special-education/osx/

If you would like further support in using any of these tools, you are welcome to book an appointment with an Academic Skills Adviser via our Online Calendar in the Online Careers & Academic Skills Centre.

If you feel that you have additional support needs and haven't already done so, please contact the Disability Service: disabilityservice@uws.ac.uk